NEWS
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DONORS' GIFTS FUND FIRST FULL OSEOLA MCCARTY SCHOLARSHIPS

By Sharon Wertz

HATTIESBURG, Miss. -- Oseola McCarty planted the seeds.

But it is the gifts of hundreds of additional donors that have produced the harvest: four full-tuition Oseola McCarty Scholarships to the University of Southern Mississippi for 1997-1998.

Four students have been presented $2,400 Oseola McCarty Scholarships, the first from the fund to pay full in-state tuition costs.

The new recipients are freshman Jessica Clemons of Hattiesburg and senior Joseph Milton of Mendenhall. The $1,000 scholarships of earlier recipients, junior Stephanie Bullock and senior Carletta Barnes, both of Hattiesburg, have been renewed at the $2,400 level.

Bullock, a junior USM marketing major who received the initial $1,000 Oseola McCarty Scholarship in 1995, called the increased scholarship level "wonderful news. The beauty of it is that others' gifts made these full scholarships possible."

McCarty, who started it all with her July 1995 planned endowed gift of $150,000 to USM, called the new recipients "gorgeous, gorgeous. It makes me feel real good to feel like I'm doing something."

McCarty's gift for scholarships made history and international headlines. It also made McCarty a celebrity -- the subject of cover stories in scores of magazines, the *New York Times* and other publications; a guest on virtually every TV network and at the White House.

The story of the 87-year-old washerwoman with a sixth-grade education who donated most of her life savings for scholarships touched people around the world. Hundreds, inspired by her example, sent donations to the scholarship fund.

McCarty's own gift is in the form of an irrevocable trust agreement: the money, handled by her bank, will give her an income for life but her gift will not go to USM until after her death.

The USM Foundation funded the initial Oseola McCarty Scholarship in fall 1995 so that McCarty, now 89, could "see and hug" the recipient -- Bullock -- while McCarty was alive to enjoy it. The foundation subsequently launched a drive to match McCarty's $150,000 gift. To date, donors worldwide have contributed $294,077 to the scholarship fund in honor of McCarty.

Last year, Barnes was awarded the first $1,000 scholarship from the interest from the scholarship fund. Now the interest from donors' gifts is sufficient to provide full $2,400 scholarships for the